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By Erich Bridges

International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Generation X is coming of age just as Christian missions is waking up to the full challenge and potential of reaching unreached peoples.

Coincidence? Not likely, if missions history is any guide.

"The young people of this generation do not apologize for worldwide missions . . . They believe in it as has no preceding generation of young people . . . Let us rise and resolve that, at whatever cost of self-denial, that live or die, we shall live or die for the evangelization of the world in our day."

John R. Mott said that — in 1901. Mott led the Student Volunteer Movement, launched in 1886, which helped spur the "second wave" of modern missions: the inland thrust from coastal cities by missionaries searching out the lost. Of the 100,000 students who participated in the Student Volunteer Movement, 20,000 reportedly went overseas to spread the gospel.

The International Mission Board (IMB) has a "whole crew of people that are literally willing to die for their people group," says Jim Riddell, associate director of IMB mission personnel selection.

"These are people who have bought into this image of living on the edge, this goal of 'all peoples, nothing less,' and they want to do what it takes to

reach their people group. This is largely a Buster and Generation X group."

Many went to the field as short-term workers in restricted

groups still in darkness. Hooten calls them "commandos."

"They're possibility thinkers," says Lloyd Atkinson, IMB associate vice president for

missionaries this year, 260 were assigned to The Last Frontier.

Students don't just accept challenging assignments; they ask for them.

"They say, 'I want to go to a place where nobody else wants to serve, and I'm willing to do what it takes for me to get there,'" explains Mike Lopez, IMB student section chief. "For the most part, they raise their own money . . ."

Raised in a tumultuous American society, comfortable with multiple cultures and surfing the Internet, Xers "can live with chaos," observes David Garrison, IMB strategy and mobilization leader and a pioneer in targeting unreached peoples.

More and more of them come to the task well-informed about the thousands of ethnic-linguistic peoples untouched by the gospel.

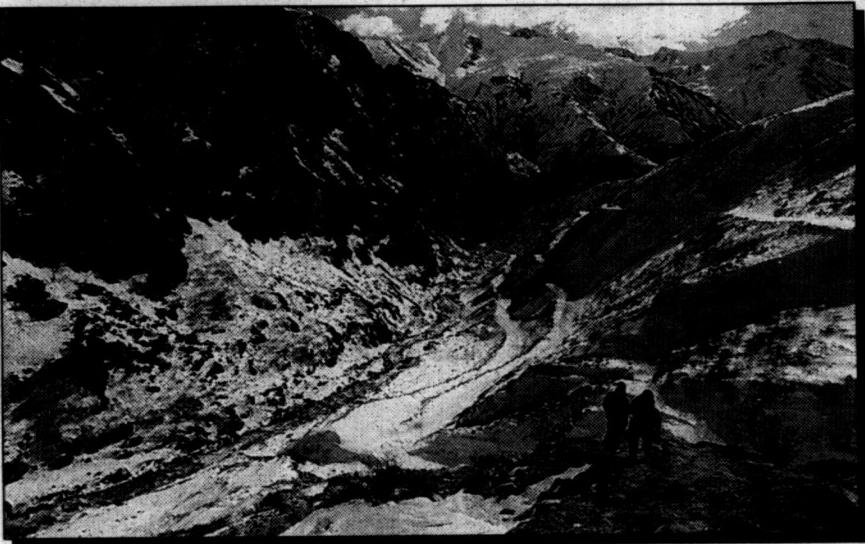
Xers with a taste of The Last Frontier like to sit up all night trading stories about how close they came to the edge while sharing the gospel.

They go into unreached villages, make friends quickly and share their faith — and sometimes get pulled into police stations for questioning or sent packing.

"We used to see that as a sign of failure," Garrison says. "They see it as a sign of success."

Not too many years ago, Garrison found little interest in unreached peoples when he talked to students on college and seminary campuses.

Now, he says, they seek him out and declare, "I want my life to make a difference. I want a cause worth dying for."



ON THE EDGE — Generation X missionaries increasingly ask to be sent to some of the toughest places, physically and spiritually, in The Last Frontier. The couple silhouetted here is assigned to an unreached people group in Asia. (BP special photo)

areas among untouched peoples. Some come home and share the vision of "all peoples, nothing less" among others in local churches. Others decide to commit to the task for a lifetime and become career missionaries.

Emeritus IMB missionary Jimmie Hooten, who helped lead a campaign to reach the Maasai people of Kenya, saw a number of adventurous young missionaries arrive in Africa during his latter years there: missionaries willing to do — and do without — whatever is necessary to reach people

mission personnel. "They honestly believe every people in the world can be reached for Christ, and that this might be the last generation of missionaries. They want to be a part of that."

"That's why I don't think a lot of them are interested in just maintaining something someone else started."

Last year, 101 of the 207 career missionaries appointed by the IMB went to The Last Frontier. Eighty-nine of its 415 shorter-term personnel on the field last year — including journeymen, who must be under 30 to attend orientation — were assigned to The Last Frontier. Of more than 500 IMB summer

SBC, BWA leaders meet

Members of the special study committee requested by Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Tom Elliff to examine "objectives, doctrinal positions and operational procedures" of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), met with BWA general secretary Denton Lotz and BWA president Nilson Fanini, a pastor from Brazil, on Oct. 29 in Nashville.

Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, told Baptist Press that the meeting was "very informative, especially for the Executive Committee members appointed to this committee. Since they have not been directly involved in the BWA, they were able to gain significant knowledge about the organization and its purpose."

"We had frank and honest discussions and were pleased with the cordial spirit in which the discussions took place. Dr. Fanini has invited the special committee to the BWA headquarters for continuing the dialogue on issues of concern," Lotz said.

The BWA is a fellowship of 191 Baptist unions and conventions comprising a membership of more than 42 million baptized believers, BWA officials said. The SBC Cooperative Program Budget allocates \$417,838 to the BWA for 1997-98, which is more than one-third of the BWA total budget.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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Looking back

10 years ago

More than 70 Southern Baptists from across the U.S. are appointed to seven subcommittees charged with producing a new hymnal by 1991. Publication will coincide with the Sunday School Board's 100th anniversary and the church music department's 50th anniversary.

20 years ago

The Miss. Brotherhood Department announces development of a strategy for disaster relief, according to director Paul Harrell. Plans call for area coordinators and teams from around to state who could respond to a natural disaster or other emergency situation.

30 years ago

The first unit of Byram Church is completed and the people of the church are rejoicing. The building cost \$16,000 and has a seating capacity of 500. Within the last three years, the church has grown from 70 members to 160 members. H. J. Bennett is pastor.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Do the media promote evil?

What effect does the omnipresent American news/entertainment media have on our culture? Ask 100 people and there will likely be 100 opinions — if not more.

Much of the diversity of opinion on the American news/entertainment media has to do with the diversity of the American population. Different age groups have different opinions on what constitutes entertainment, as do different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups. One person's entertainment is another person's noise.

If you're a Christian, you can't help but be disturbed by the immoral sewage pouring through every opening into our homes.

Apologists are quick to point out there is no compelling scientific evidence to prove people are adversely affected by the news/entertainment media. Others believe it is the worst possible influence on our declining culture.

Some Christians believe it's time to take a strong stand against the news/entertainment media, while others believe such a move can only harm our Christian witness.

Everybody's got an opinion, and so many opinions on such a hot topic can be confusing.

Into this fray step two unassuming Mississippi Baptists, both in positions of great influence.

Frank Pollard, senior pastor of First Church, Jackson, is quoted in an Oct. 26 column by David Petty, executive editor of The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson, as telling his congregation a few Sundays ago that the media not only reported evil, the media promoted evil.

Petty took issue with Pollard's statement, at least where The Clarion-Ledger is concerned, and he said so in his Oct. 26 column.

Petty, a member of First Church, is a gracious man who takes his telephone calls and spends as much time with each caller as necessary to explain what he means in

his columns. His first column several months ago as he began his new job at The Clarion-Ledger was a strong, unapologetic witness to the power of Jesus in his life.

In today's proudly "post-Christian" America, that took courage any way you slice it.

Petty wrote in his Oct. 26 column that he doesn't believe The Clarion-Ledger promotes evil, and he correctly pointed out the many ways by which the newspaper supports good things in our state and community.

He then chided people — including himself — who paint with the "broad brush" of group classifications instead of seeing the contributions of individuals. His point is well-taken, but the larger question still begs an answer. Does the news/entertainment media promote evil?

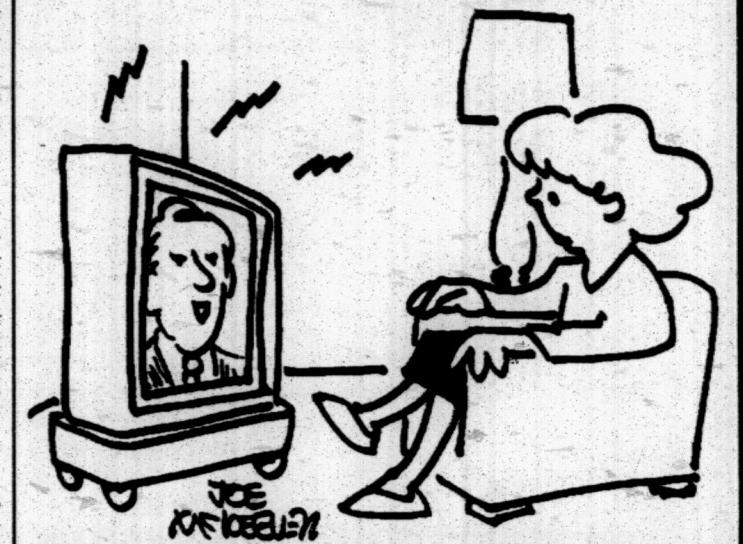
Take one issue of Petty's newspaper, which admittedly is not responsible for every bad thing that happens in the media today. Among the items in the issue of Oct. 30:

- ◆ Topless bars were advertised in the sports section where youngsters checking scores of their favorite teams would be sure to view the ads. Putting aside the demeaning of women, surely the combination of alcohol and nudity at these "gentlemen's clubs" can only lead to tragedy in the lives of many of our young people.

- ◆ In the "Mississippi Weekend" insert, the regular full-color gambling feature explained the fine points of five-card stud poker. In addition, a "Gaming Q&A" column on the same page offered the following advice: "Q: What is the most important thing to know when playing poker? A: The art of lying."

- ◆ The personals section in the classified ads featured the following entry:

"PORTIONS OF PASTOR ED'S SERMON WERE ADAPTED FOR TELEVISION — WHICH EXPLAINS THE ABSENCE OF ANYTHING SPECIFIC, TIMELY, OR OFFENSIVE."



"Attractive MWM (married white male) pushing 50. Time for a change! ISO (in search of) busty WF (white female) over 25 for LTR (long term relationship)..."

Petty is not responsible for every single line that goes into each day's newspaper, but likewise let's not quibble over whether the news/entertainment media promote evil. That seems to be a slam-dunk fact, with all due respect to the individuals being painted with such a "broad brush."

Instead of the division and confusion that come from arguing among ourselves, let us be about the business of demonstrating our Christianity every day to a lost world sorely in need of the Savior's message. If the world sees Jesus in us whenever they look our way, the work of our Lord has been advanced.

He can take it from there.

GUEST OPINION:

An open letter from your child

By Richard Polzin, member
First Church, Jackson

hard on me if I'm not as clear as you might be.

◆ I will continue to act irresponsibly as long as you continue to make excuses for me.

◆ Bad habits are hard to break. The sooner you point them out to me, the easier it will be for me to correct them.

◆ I need lots and lots of unconditional love, but I don't need to remind you, do I?

◆ When you say, "I'm sorry," I find it much easier for me to say, "I'm sorry."

◆ When I see you taking good care of yourself, I know deep down that you are taking good care of me.

◆ I need to learn from my mistakes, so don't hold me too tight. Please be there when I do stumble; it encourages me to keep getting up.

◆ When I get mad and say, "I hate you," stay calm. It's not you I hate, but your power over me.

◆ I know I shouldn't get everything I ask for, but as long as you keep giving I'll keep asking.

◆ My constant need to ask "Why?" may seem like a bother, but it's important to me. If you refuse my questions, I may quit asking and satisfy my curiosity elsewhere.

◆ If you treat me as an equal, it's hard for me to accept your authority. Remember: I'm looking up to you, not across.

◆ Please be careful when you refer to my mistakes as sins. I'm still learning and developing my value system. I want to be just like you.

◆ Lying doesn't come easy, unless you put too much pres-

sure on my honesty.

◆ You'll never win an argument with me because I see things from a child's point of view. Just be firm but fair and my need to argue will quickly diminish.

◆ If nothing I do seems to please you, I will stop trying.

◆ How others see me is very important. Please don't correct me in front of others or pull me to the side. I think you'll find I'll even pay more attention when you talk with me.

◆ You may draw the line, but rest assured I will always be right on the edge of that line. You move forward, I move forward. You weaken and step back, I weaken and step back.

◆ When you are consistent, I understand the consequences of my behavior. When you are inconsistent it means I just have to try harder to control you.

◆ When I have a problem, please don't run to solve it for me. Just hold my hand and guide me. I need learn how to solve problems on my own.

The day will come when I won't have your hand to hold.

Polzin is a motivational speaker and author of *Worthy is the Child*, a collection of 32 children's stories based on moral absolutes.

Chinese group severs ties to IMB work

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP and BP) — China's government-sanctioned Protestant organization has ended its partnership with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) International Mission Board (IMB), charging the board "secretly" sent missionaries into the country without its approval.

Han Wenzao, head of the China Christian Council (CCC), which is affiliated with the World Council of Churches, charged that the International Mission Board is "secretly" sending "church workers from abroad ... to carry out missionary work in China" without consulting the council.

He leveled the accusation in an open letter to "friends of the church in China," dated Nov. 3 and posted on the Internet home page of Amity News Service, the council's communication arm.

"In this [two-track] view, while not giving up its partner-

ship with the CCC as the 'open track,' it will try to give major attention to a clandestine track, through which church workers from abroad are secretly sent to China to carry out 'missionary' work as dictated by the IMB.

"These persons do not intend to make their identities or their relationship to the IMB known, either to the CCC or to the Chinese government. We cannot see how this can be justified on Christian terms."

"Therefore the CCC has informed a representative of the IMB that we will not cooperate in their deception and that we cannot have partnership with any organization holding to a 'two-track approach' and give legitimacy to secret infiltration," the open letter stated.

Officials of the Richmond, Va.-based board responded that IMB has affirmed its commitment to a multi-channel approach to service and ministry

in China in lieu of an exclusive approach as requested by CCC.

"Southern Baptists love the people of China, and IMB wants to facilitate Christians responding to requests for teachers, consultants, and other personnel through any open opportunity to do so."

"There has been no change or recent development in what we are doing as implied by the publicized letter. While we do not work exclusively with the CCC, we have been grateful for the opportunity to provide personnel and resources for ministries and projects through the Amity Foundation."

"We would not consider other things we are doing as secretive, deceptive or clandestine, simply because it is not channeled through the China Christian Council," said IMB President Jerry Rankin.

The IMB opened formal ties with CCC in 1996 and currently has eight missionaries officially registered with the group or its social service arm, the Amity Foundation.

Since the 1980s, IMB (formerly the Foreign Mission Board) has used other channels to send workers to China. Most respond to Chinese invitations to fill secular positions in the country's universities, hospitals and businesses, and share their Christian faith as opportunities are presented.

Others, however, are appointed as missionaries and specifically assigned the task of sharing their faith in China with "unreached people groups" — Chinese minorities that have never heard the gospel. These IMB workers live in adjacent countries and often travel in and out of China on tourist visas.

Apparently this is the two-track approach criticized by the China Christian Council.

The mission board's China strategy and policy have been in place for a decade and haven't changed recently, said Don Kammerdiener, IMB executive vice president.

The current multi-track approach (of working with the official CCC as well as through other channels) was instituted under the administration of Parks, who is currently global missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

"Through the years we struggled with this (multi-track approach) with the China Christian Council," Parks told Robert Dilday of the Virginia Baptist Religious Herald newspaper. "I tried to make concessions (to the CCC), but we never were able to (work it out)."

China holds a strong place in Southern Baptist hearts. It was to China that they appointed their first missionary in 1845.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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Showing the folks around



One of the youngest "messengers" at the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting Oct. 28-29 was Parker Wyatt (center), seven months old, of Crystal Springs. Parker escorted parents Michelle (left) and Brad Wyatt to the meeting. Parker's dad is minister of students at Harmony Church, Crystal Springs. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Miss. CP tops \$2.4M

Mississippi Baptists gave a total of \$2,403,303 through the Cooperative Program (CP) in October, bringing 1997 total gifts to \$21,932,152, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which disburses the funds.

That 10-month total is \$1,811,247, or nine %, ahead of budget, which for 10 months would be \$20,120,905.

The total 1997 Cooperative Program budget is \$24,145,086. This means that if giving continues in patterns of previous years, there will be funding for the challenge portion of the budget in the \$1.8 million range.

The challenge portion sends 50% to Christian higher education; 20% to foreign missions; 10% to home missions, and 20% to Mississippi missions.

The higher education challenge funds would be divided among the Miss. Baptist Education Commission and the three Mississippi Baptist-affiliated schools:

Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain.
Mississippi College in Clinton.
William Carey College in Hattiesburg.

SBC CP surges 7%

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) receipts for October, the first month of a new SBC fiscal year, surged nearly 7% over October 1996, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officers of the SBC Executive Committee.

For October 1997, the SBC received \$13,176,027 in CP gifts compared to \$12,315,117 in the previous year's October. The \$860,910 increase is 6.99%.

For the first month of the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the October figure surpassed the required monthly budget figure of \$12,348,756 by \$827,270 or 6.7%.

Designated gifts for the month also showed a gain: \$1,964,478 compared to October 1996 of \$1,715,893. The increase of \$248,585 is 14.49%.

The October increases come on the heels of a fourth consecutive year of record giving by Southern Baptists through the SBC Cooperative Program. The 1996-97 SBC fiscal year, Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, ended with more than \$155 million in SBC CP gifts, surpassing the previous year by nearly \$7 million and the budget by nearly \$10 million.

Clinton woman using illness as testimony

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

In January of this year Beth Faries stood before a group of women gathered at a restaurant in Clarksdale and shared her testimony. It was the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of Beth and her husband Jack, who live in Clinton.

Beth was a self-described "exercise nut" in 1990, jogging as much as four miles a day, playing on two different tennis teams, and raising two boys, Bryant and Blake.

That all began to change when her left hand became paralyzed and her speech began to slur. Tests revealed a blocked carotid artery which was treated with an angioplasty procedure.

Beth went on with life. Three years later, however, the symptoms reappeared. On November 21, 1992, the day after a second angioplasty procedure, Beth suffered a major stroke.

She went into a coma, her kidneys failed, her lungs filled up with fluids, her heart beat was irregular, and she was placed on a respirator.

Jack stayed by her side in ICU. "She was all taped and tubed up," he said. "All I could see was a little piece of hair on the top of her head."

The doctors told Jack to call together family members. They did not expect Beth Faries to live. Thirty days later, Beth came out of the coma.

"I would sing to her every day as I held her hand," he said.

"I can remember hearing him sing," Beth said. "The doctors said I may never walk again. I said 'no way.'"

Her entire left side was paralyzed. She could not feed herself, sit up in the bed or talk. After intensive therapy the doctors in Memphis sent Beth home in a wheelchair.

She continued rehabilitation therapy at the Methodist Rehab Center in Jackson, learning again how to walk and talk. She even had to relearn the kind of normal social graces we take for granted.

After four years of hard work, her life was approaching normal. Then one day while attending a Precepts Bible study at Morrison Heights Church something happened. Beth became convinced that God wanted her to share her testimony with people.

"God was speaking to me," she said. "I said to him, 'Lord, I love you and I am so thankful for my life, and I am willing to go share with anyone, anywhere.'"

A few days later she received a flier in the mail about being a speaker for Christian Women's Clubs (CWC).

"I didn't expect God to answer me so quickly," Beth said.

Beth went to a writer's seminar. Then she spent two weeks writing and memorizing her testimony. It is 25 minutes long.

Then in January an invitation came to speak at the Clarksdale CWC meeting.

"I have to admit, at first I did not support her (in this)," Jack said. "I didn't think she could stand up to the pressure. My faith was about this big." Jack shows two fingers less than an inch apart.

Jack's concern was understandable. Beth has very little movement in her left arm. She also has to wear a leg brace on her left leg for ankle support.

"I was so excited, ready to share about the Lord. I had a peace from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet," she said.

At CWC meetings, women are asked to fill out comment cards. That night one woman indicated she prayed to receive Christ.

When Beth came home and shared this with Jack, he realized that the Lord was opening this door. "We have since started working together," he said.

Having done church music for many years, Jack put together music and accompaniment to go along with her speech. "It all works together to make a complete message," he said.

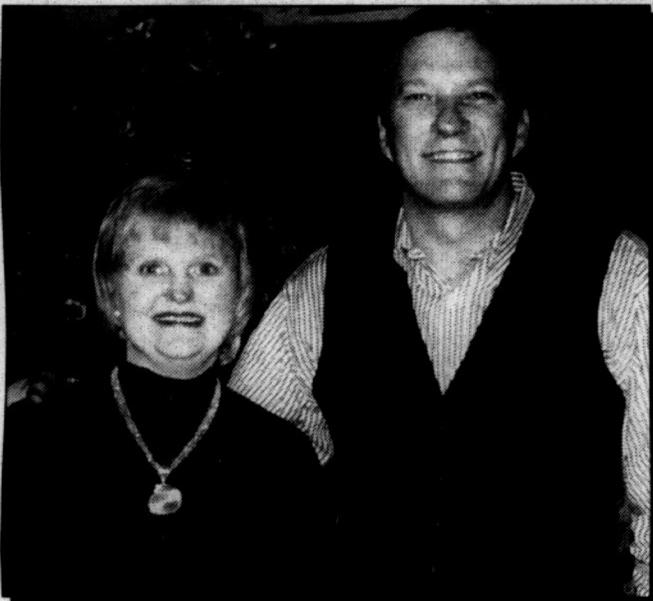
Since that first trip to Clarksdale, the Faries have been to many Mississippi churches.

"I never thought in a million years after my stroke that I would be up speaking before large groups of people," she said. "But God had a plan."

"We seek no financial gain," Jack said. "We only want to serve."

"We are willing to go to a church, whenever, wherever, whoever, to share my testimony," Beth added.

"I know this is not Beth doing this. (The Lord) is speaking through me. I just give God the glory, honor and praise."



MIRACLE MINISTRIES — Beth and Jack Faries of Clinton have developed a ministry of music and testimony of how God brought them through the difficult experience of a stroke. (Photo by Carl M. White)

plasty procedure, Beth suffered a major stroke. She went into a coma, her kidneys failed, her lungs filled up with fluids, her heart beat was irregular, and she was placed on a respirator.

Jack stayed by her side in ICU. "She was all taped and tubed up," he said. "All I could see was a little piece of hair on the top of her head."

Annuity Board trustees approve benefit increases

DALLAS (BP) — Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention voted to give a 10% permanent increase in January 1998 to most of the 28,000 retirees in pay status in December 1997, during their Nov. 3-4 meeting in Dallas.

Trustees also voted to increase Adopt An Annuitant supplementary benefits by 50%, to \$75 a month. People on the board's relief roll also will receive 10% increases in their checks at the end of January.

Treasurer William C. Lee reported on contributions and earnings through the third quarter, saying total assets reached \$6.41 billion, up 13.1% from \$5.67 billion at the beginning of the year.

Comprehensive medical plan rates in the Personal Security Program (PSP), offered by the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, will enter 1998 without a rate increase. There has been only one rate increase for the plan since 1992.

Life rates, accidental death, and dismemberment, and long-term disability rates will not change for 1998.

More than 2,700 retired Southern Baptist workers — most of them pastors or widows — receiving Adopt An Annuitant benefits will see a 50% increase in their monthly income supplements at the end of January 1998.

Meanwhile, nearly 600 relief recipients supported by the convention's Annuity Board

will receive a 10% increase. Relief benefits, funded by the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, and by the Retired Ministers Support Fund of the Annuity Board, will be increased to \$200 per month for individuals and \$265 for a couple. More than half the relief recipients receive no regular annuity benefit because their churches never enrolled them in the Church Annuity Plan.

The Adopt An Annuitant benefit, to increase from \$50 to \$75, is funded by direct gifts to the board to give special help to annuitants with very low benefits. By the end of September 1997, the number of adopted people or couples had reached 2,745. Five more were added at the November meeting of trustees. The Adopt An Annuitant program was launched in 1981.

Trustees voted to grant a permanent 10% increase in benefits for most annuitants receiving benefits established for periods of 60 months or longer. The increase is effective Jan. 1, 1998, and will appear in checks or deposits at the end of the month.

The increase is the seventh in 10 years, and the largest since 1992.

This 10% increase will not be paid to variable annuities or to death and disability benefits paid as a result of the Church Annuity Plan's protection section. Protection section benefits are paid from a separate fund.

The increase also will not apply to fixed-period benefits of less than five years, or to installment benefits.

Benefits in 1998 for variable annuities will be determined in a regular, scheduled calculation later this month, and recipients will be notified in January what

their new benefit will be at the end of that month. Variable annuity benefits were increased 15.47% in 1997.

Trustees also used their Nov. 3 evening dinner as a time of tribute to Paul W. Powell who stepped down as president on Sept. 30, 1997.

Donation presented



Andy Holder (right) presents a check for \$5,800 to Robin Nichols (left), Annuity Board representative to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, for the Adopt an Annuitant ministry. The money is from the first annual Retired Ministers Golf Tournament, held Sept. 11, 12 at Brookwood Golf Club and sponsored by Raymond Road Church, Jackson. Holder, a retired maintenance supervisor at the Veterans Hospital, was inspired by a video on the Adopt an Annuitant ministry, which provides financial assistance to retired ministers and their spouses who have inadequate retirement funds. Next year's tournament will be held Sept. 11, 1998 at Brookwood. (Photo by Carl M. White)

State conventions convene around country

NEW MEXICO

N.M. Baptists adopt first \$3 million budget

TUCUMCARI, N.M. (BP) — New Mexico Baptists adopted their convention's first-ever \$3 million budget during their annual meeting in Tucumcari.

The new budget will require \$3,016,471 in Cooperative Program giving from the convention's churches, an increase of 4.1% over the 1997 budget.

The convention will forward 30.5% of the Cooperative Program receipts, an estimated \$896,539, to the Southern Baptist Convention for North American and international missions and other ministries, after an exception of \$77,000 in preferred items is applied. The percentage is the same as last year.

The remaining 69.5%, \$2,042,932, along with additional income of \$981,653 from other sources, will be used to support a total operating budget of \$3,024,585 to carry out mission work in New Mexico.

IOWA

Iowa Baptists increase CP for Baptist causes

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (BP) — Iowa Baptists, in their second annual meeting, increased the percentage of the convention's Cooperative Program receipts devoted to national and international missions by 1%.

The Oct. 31-Nov. 1 meeting, attended by 91 messengers from 102 churches and missions, was held at Sioux City's

Mount Olive Church, which meets in a former synagogue.

In the 1998 budget, \$361,399 in CP gifts is expected. The convention plans to send \$86,736 to Southern Baptist Convention causes which is 24%, an increase of one percent over last year.

Messengers approved a 5.78% increase in the convention's overall budget, set at \$1,415,720 for '98, counting CP giving and other SBC support of Baptist work in Iowa.

John Shaull, pastor of First Church, Winterset, was re-elected convention president.

NORTH /SOUTH DAKOTA

Dakota fellowship adopts second \$1-million budget

WILLISTON, N.D. (BP) — The Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship for the second year in a row has adopted a \$1-million-plus budget, the first being adopted by the two-state group last year.

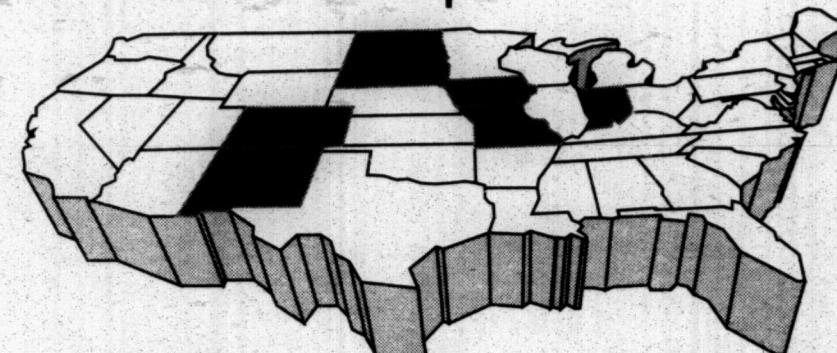
The 1998 budget, as approved by 75 messengers at this year's annual meeting, will be \$1,030,890, a 2.5% increase over the current budget.

This year's sessions, Oct. 22-23, were held at First Church, Williston, N.D.

In Cooperative Program giving from the fellowship's 96 churches in North and South Dakota \$218,622 is anticipated in the budget, 14% of which will be forwarded to Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries, the same percentage as the current year.

Garvon Golden, pastor of the Williston congregation, was re-elected as the fellowship's president. Elected as new officers were vice president, Ron Rich, pastor of Riverwood Church, Bismarck, N.D., and recording secretary, Brenda Lee, a member of Cornerstone Church, Grand Forks, N.D.

es; 35.75% to Southern Baptist Convention causes; and 6% to SBC/MBC joint causes.



INDIANA

Indiana Baptists approve exec board inclusiveness

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (BP) — Southern Baptists in Indiana approved a bylaw change to insure that representatives from racial and English-as-a-second-language people groups serve on the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SCBI) executive board.

Messengers adopted a 1998 budget of \$3,648,027, a 7.58% increase over the current year. SCBI administrative staff anticipates Cooperative Program receipts of \$2,202,800; 32.25% of which will be forwarded to Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministry causes, the same percentage as 1997.

MISSOURI

Missouri Baptists elevate second v.p. Page to presidency

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP) — Wendell Page, pastor of First Church, Lee's Summit, was elected president of the Missouri Baptist Convention (MBC) during its 163rd annual meeting, Oct. 27-29 at Springfield's University Plaza Convention Center.

Messengers adopted a Cooperative Program budget goal of \$16.4 million for 1998, an increase of \$900,000 over 1997. The formula for distribution of CP receipts remains the same: 58.25% to Missouri caus-

COLORADO

Colo. Baptists retire debt

DENVER (BP) — Colorado Baptists celebrated the retirement of a \$542,000 loan during their annual meeting Oct. 28-29 at University Hills Church, Denver.

The convention, encompassing 334 churches and missions, now has only one loan for \$1.27 million.

In officer elections, the new president is James Vaughn, director of missions for the Grand Valley Baptist Association, Grand Junction; first vice president, Rick Lewis, pastor of Emmanuel Church, Sterling; and second vice president, Willard Johnson, associate pastor of the Baptist Temple, Denver.

Johnson is said to be the first African American to hold office in the Colorado Baptist Convention.

The convention, attended by 234 messengers, adopted a 1998 budget of \$2,884,768, an increase of \$46,000 over the current budget. The total includes an anticipated \$1.5 million in Cooperative Program giving by Colorado churches, 29% of which will be forwarded to Southern Baptist Convention North American and international missions and ministries, the same percentage as the current year.

English workshop set Nov. 20-23

A workshop on "Teaching Conversational English" will be held at First Church, Jackson, on Nov. 20-23. Times for the workshop are 7-9 p.m. on Nov. 20-21; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Nov. 22; and 2-5 p.m. on Nov. 23. The workshop is open to all persons interested in helping to provide a practical Christian witness in the growing immigrant community in central Miss. For more information, contact Vicki Heath, WMU Director at First Church, Jackson. Telephone: (601) 948-1908.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbauer, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

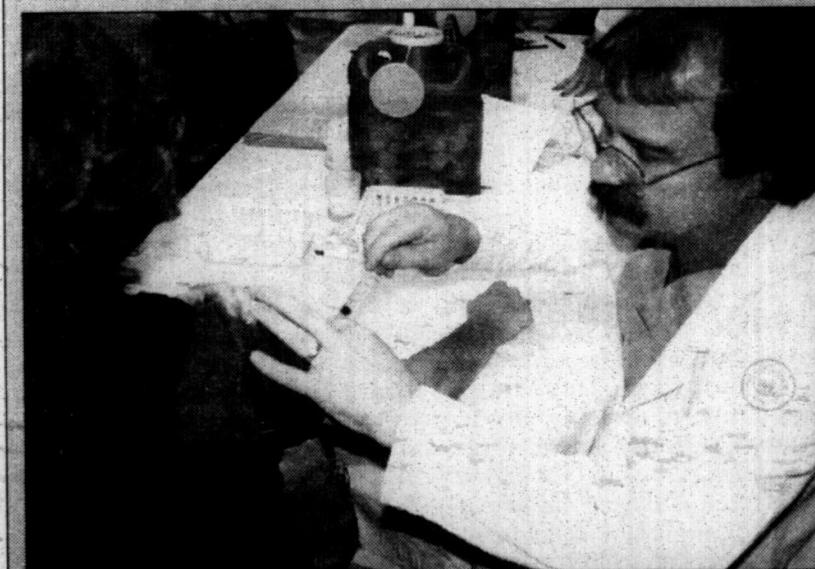
I was very upset to see my husband and his former lover flirting with each other. I feel very unloved right now, as if the progress we have made since his adultery has been washed away. Is that feeling normal?

The painful wound that was once healing has not only been reopened, but salt has been rubbed into it. It is understandable that you perceive this incident as a major setback. You have been wronged and hurt; such feelings are perfectly normal when trust has been violated. You know that now, but you can't stop there. Take the risk and attempt to communicate with your husband about this matter. It is hoped — urged — that you have a pastor or Christian counselor with whom the two of you can dis-

cuss this issue, because it is important for both of you to understand what prompts such behavior on his part. What satisfaction does your husband get from flirting with other women? Did something change in your relationship with him before the flirting and adultery? Don't misunderstand — this situation is not your fault, but you must be honest enough to discover the reasons your marriage slipped into the slow decay that culminated in adultery. Your husband is ultimately responsible for his actions, but so are you for your actions. That's why it is important that you be the wife God created you to be. You are God's prized child. Conduct yourself accordingly, because your example will help as God deals with your husband.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

"A little stick..."



Gary Plummer, student nurse, Mississippi College, gives a flu shot to a messenger at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Oct. 28 at First Church, Jackson. Flu shots were one of many services provided at the Health Fair, jointly sponsored by the Baptist Medical Center and the Mississippi College School of Nursing. (Photo by Carl M. White)

IMB's Coleman prepares for 'God-sized task'

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — If one way to value a man's work is measuring the legacy he leaves, then David Coleman's contributions to the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) are significant.

Coleman, 55, was recognized for 29 years of service with the board as he retired in October to take the reins of a multi-faceted urban mission in Atlanta.



Coleman

"We're going to Atlanta to take up a God-sized task," Coleman says. "We don't have the personal resources to meet the need, but God has always met our needs."

His friends say that's one thing that sets him apart: At an age when others kick back, he's just gearing up to start anew and trusting God for the results.

Such a fresh approach is one of his trademarks. As a missionary, Coleman helped lead Zimbabwe Baptists to take over

ministries started by colleagues.

Today the Zimbabwe Baptist Convention continues to assume more and more responsibility and continues to grow in size and strength. In 1996, Zimbabwe Baptists reported 5,284 baptisms and 24 new churches.

The Colemans were among those who had continued to work in the country — then Rhodesia — as it fought for independence. At one point after war broke out in 1973, the number of missionaries in the country shrank from 75 to 25.

Coleman saw his role as business manager and treasurer on the field as primarily a support to help free other missionaries to work, but he also invested himself in establishing churches that still meet today.

His wife stayed active in women's work and was elected the first woman chairman of the organization of missionaries in Zimbabwe.

In the States, as the board's director of development the past eight years, Coleman translated his love and belief in Southern Baptist missions into a desire to see others con-

tribute. He hit Southern Baptists in one of the places it helps the most — the pocketbook.

"This hasn't been what you might call 'traditional' ministry, but it has helped to advance the cause of Christ around the world," says David Button, the board's vice president for public relations and development. "That's this board's primary objective, and I don't know of anyone who has been any more committed to it than David."

Fighting the inertia of Southern Baptist tradition, Coleman worked in recent years to offer Southern Baptists more ways to give directly to field needs. In 1992, he began working with churches to help them tailor special mission offerings to specific needs on the field.

The annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and contributions from churches to Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program, historically have underwritten the board's overseas work. In the 1990s, many Southern Baptists — like Americans in general — are

responding better to a more personal hands-on approach to giving, Coleman says.

"David combined competence in his field of fund-raising and a clear understanding of the missionary task," says Don R. Kammerdiener, the board's executive vice president. Untold dollars he raised have yet to be seen; they will come through gifts from the estates of future donors after they die.

When increases in giving to the board through its primary channels temporarily lost steam a few years ago, Coleman and others worked to create a strategic giving plan — allowing donors to give to specific needs on the field. The "Solutions" program for the first time publicly encouraged individuals or groups to earmark money to pay for missionary projects.

"We saw what was happening on the field," Coleman recalls. Giving was inadequate to fully fund all the proposed capital needs, such as vehicles and buildings. "Plus, donor mentality was such that they wanted to find more direct ways to give."

Admit that you are a sinner.
There is none righteous, not even one. (Rom. 3:10)

Accept God's love for you.
God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

Acknowledge Christ as Lord.
If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. (Rom. 10:9)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

Bible curriculum centered in national spotlight

FORT MYERS, Fla. (BP) — Florida's Lee County School Board voted 3-2 Oct. 21 to adopt a New Testament studies curriculum for high schools in the Fort Myers area, after approving an Old Testament high school curriculum in August.

The Bible-history curriculum consists of elective studies in addition to traditional history courses. Sample items require students to identify historical events in the Bible and trace their implications.

The curriculum was developed by the North Carolina-based National Council on Bible Curriculum in Schools. It is taught in 22 according to the group.

Some groups, such as the People for the American Way, have threatened legal challenges to the curriculum, citing separation of church and state. One of their concerns is if the curriculum would attempt to indoctrinate students by teaching faith, not history.

The vote in Lee County came after a two-hour debate involving about 70 of 200 people attending the school board meeting, according to The Florida Times-Union in Jacksonville.

School superintendent Bruce Harter advised against the action, proposing a different Bible curriculum that would omit Jesus' resurrection and other parts of the New Testament.

School board attorneys expressed doubt the adopted curriculum would stand up under constitutional scrutiny.

About 125 in seven high schools, among the school district's 13,500 high school stu-

dents, have signed up for an Old Testament course slated to begin in January, the Florida Baptist Witness reported.

Jay Sekulow, a religious liberty lawyer with the conservative-oriented American Center for Law and Justice, said the Bible "should not be a banned

book in our culture," in reports in USA Today and Religion News Service. "It's been treated as if it were asbestos," he said.

A spokesperson for People for the American Way, Lisa Versaci, however, countered in the news reports, "They're teaching the Bible as if it were

historical fact. By doing that, you're teaching schoolchildren there is only one faith. It's not everyone's reality, and it can't be taught that way."

Religious teaching now is offered in about 18% of U.S. school districts, according to USA Today and RNS.

Reccord inaugurated as first NAMB head

MARIETTA, Ga. (BP) — Bob Reccord stopped his inaugural service to have prayer for two staff members.

"Nothing we do this evening will be more important than praying for one another,"

Well Street Church to celebrate his installation as the first president of Southern Baptists' newest mission agency.

He then led in prayer for one staff member whose wife had recently died and another whose wife was diagnosed with cancer.

During his remarks, Reccord asked those in attendance to do two things for him. "Please pray for me. I am the most inadequate of anyone to be in the role and only God can help us do what needs to be done," Reccord pled. "Secondly, give me the grace to fail. Some decisions I make will be wrong, but if we are going to make a difference in North America for Jesus Christ, we must find out what doesn't work in order to implement what does work."

NAMB was organized last June as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) restructuring called Covenant for a New Century. The new agency has assumed a majority of the ministry assignments of three former agencies: the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission, and Brotherhood Commission.

In addressing the task of reaching the United States and Canada for Christ, Reccord sounded a Biblical refrain. "As I have walked through so many cities in the past few months, I hear a haunting voice say 'come help us,'" he said. "In Raleigh, North Carolina, Calgary and Vancouver, Canada, and Denver, Colorado and so many



Reccord

more, I've heard the cry to 'come help us', and by God's grace we're going to help. ... Whatever it takes to reach North America for Christ, the North American Mission Board will do."

Ed Young, senior pastor of Second Church, Houston, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, brought a message urging Reccord to take time to dream the dream of reaching the U.S. and Canada for Christ. "Get above the bureaucracy," he said.

"Shuffling papers, handing out reports, and going to time-wasting meetings are not important ways for you to spend your time ... I want Bob Reccord to be the most boring man in the SBC because every time we talk to him all he wants to talk about is winning people to Jesus and starting new churches. Nothing else is worth your time," Young said.

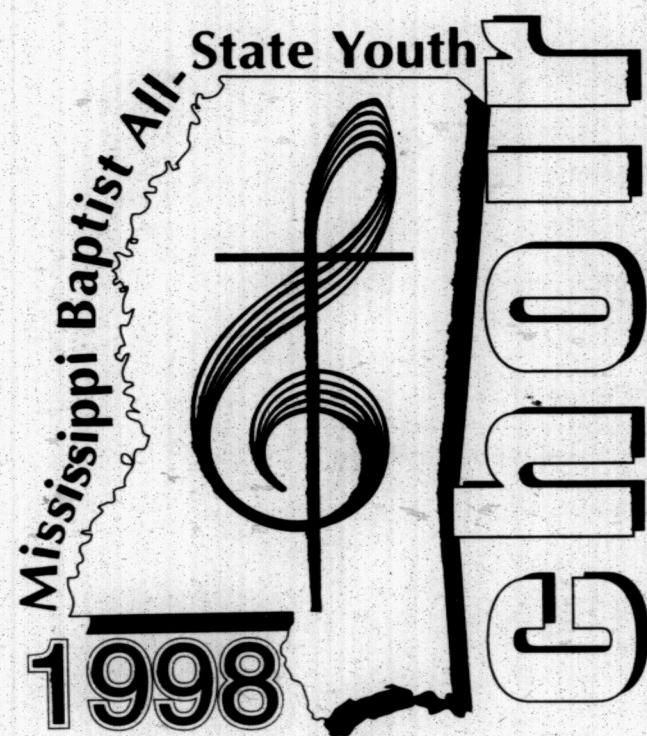
What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 13, 1997

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication**.



ALL-STATE AUDITIONS

November '97 Choral Auditions

- | | | |
|------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1st | 9 a.m.-noon | Baptist Building, Jackson |
| 3rd | 5-8 p.m. | Clarksdale BC, Clarksdale |
| 8th | 10 a.m.-noon | FBC, Ocean Springs |
| 15th | 12-2 p.m. | FBC, Summit |
| 17th | 5-8 p.m. | FBC, Meridian |

November '97 Choral & Orchestral Auditions

- | | | |
|------|-----------|--|
| 20th | 5-8 p.m. | Thomas Fine Arts Building
William Carey College |
| 21st | 5-8 p.m. | Alta Woods BC, Jackson |
| 22nd | 12-4 p.m. | North Oxford BC, Oxford |
- (ALL instrumentalists will be expected to audition vocally.)

November '97 Choral Auditions Continued

- | | | |
|------|----------|---------------------|
| 24th | 5-8 p.m. | Parkway BC, Natchez |
|------|----------|---------------------|

Register through the Church Music Department two weeks prior to audition.

Also, please note that the correct time for the Area 1 Keyboard Festival at Colonial Hills Baptist Church, Southaven, is from 9:30 a.m.-noon. The time is incorrect on the 1998 Calendar of Events inside the current issue of Upbeat.

THE SUIT PROJECT

What is it?

For over 33 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas.

This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work. This year we are sending suits to pastors in the Pennsylvania-South Jersey and North and South Dakota Conventions.

Cost:
\$130 per suit



What you can do:

Men's Ministries groups, individuals, churches, etc., can send their gifts payable to:

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Attention: Brotherhood Department, P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Designate on your check: Suit Project

Sponsored by the
Brotherhood Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus"

Deacon Ministry Emphasis

Deacon Ministry Emphasis . . . is a plan with specific actions that highlights deacon ministries and involves deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of Deacon Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on their biblical role
- Secure involvement in ministries
- Build team relationships
- Develop skills for ministry

Deacon Emphasis Week is scheduled for January 11-18, 1998, but a deacon ministry emphasis may be conducted at any time during the year.

To participate, the deacons would choose at least two actions and perform them during a specified time (preferably during **Deacon Emphasis Week**). See the possible activities listed in this brochure.

A certificate of recognition will be presented to each deacon body that officially participates.

Suggested Activities . . .

- Conduct a deacon's retreat or training event
- Conduct Pastor/Staff Appreciation Day
- Conduct prayer/planning retreat with church leaders
- Enter Deacon/Pastor Covenant to work together as partners in ministry
- Subscribe to "The Deacon" or "Growing Churches" magazine for all deacons
- Conduct activities to strengthen church fellowship
- Conduct efforts to reclaim inactive church members
- Conduct an in-house survey of the local church needs and resources
- Conduct deacon-led witnessing/visitation/prospect-find activities
- Assist staff in Discovering Spiritual Gifts study

- Enter the Deacon Family Ministry Plan
- Sponsor a special ministry project
- Sponsor a mission trip or tour
- Plan and conduct worship service
- Promote and pray for revival
- View and study video tapes
- Develop committee leadership
- Conduct a demographics study
- Study deacon resource materials
- Train worship decision counselors

For other projects and information, contact:

Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department

Matt Buckles, consultant

P O Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

(601)968-3800, extension 3907, or 1-800-748-1651



Toward a Growing Marriage seminar to be held

A practical seminar for Christian couples – married or thinking about getting married – who want to have God's best in marriage, will take place in Jackson on Feb. 20-21, 1998, at Broadmoor Baptist church.

The seminar, entitled "Toward a Growing Marriage," will be led by Gary Chapman, author of the best-selling book, "The Five Love Languages," and a book with the same title as the seminar.

Co-sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Discipleship and Family Ministry Department and the Baptist Sunday School Board, the program will offer practical ways to make good marriages better and how to help friends and family members who are

experiencing marital stress.

Topics include how to communicate in the midst of conflict, how to avoid financial bondage, how to make sex a mutual joy, and how to rekindle love or keep it alive.

The seminar begins on Friday evening at 7, and continues on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a sack lunch on Saturday.

Chapman is director of adult ministries at Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Early registration saves money at \$35 for individuals; \$65 for married or engaged couples. At the door the cost is \$45 for individuals; \$75 for couples.

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____

SPOUSE'S NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

DAYTIME PHONE _____

CHURCH GROUP _____

CIRCLE AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$65 FOR COUPLE \$35 FOR INDIVIDUAL
PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD

Toward a Growing Marriage

...And they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24

SEMINAR COST Individual Engaged or Married Couple

Early Registration Fee: \$35

\$65

Registration Fee: \$45

\$75

REGISTRATION

Return registration form to your seminar coordinator or mail to: Chapman Seminars

Post Office Box 24001 • Nashville, TN 37203.

For more information or to register call 800/254-2022.

Co-sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Family Celebration of Christmas

The Christmas season is an important time in the life of the Church and the individual Christian. The Family Celebration of Christmas plan has been developed in an effort to assist families

and churches in focusing on the true meaning of Christmas.

In each of this year's remaining issues of HouseTops you will find devotions to use weekly during this advent season.

We hope these will enrich your family as you seek to keep Christ at the center of the Christmas celebration.

Camera-ready copies of each week's devotional are available from the Department of Student Work at

P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or call 800/748-1651 or in Jackson, 968-3800.



Meaning and Purpose of Christ's Coming

Keeping Christ in Christmas seems to become more difficult with each passing year. For most people it is just a matter of knowing the meaning of Christmas, a time of worship and celebration. The weeks prior to Christmas can be meaningful as well. Just as Joseph and Mary looked forward to the birth of Jesus and his advent into our world, so do we as we celebrate his birth. This time of anticipation prior to Christmas Day is thus referred to as the season of advent.

Special observance of this time cannot be grasped hastily. The emphasis on waiting, spiritual preparation, and longing for God can put the focus on the real meaning of Christmas as well as unite the family in love, warmth, gratitude and worship.

Celebration of Christ's Coming

A wreath is often used to visualize our thinking and talking about Jesus during special times of fellowship and family worship during this season. The shape of the wreath, with no beginning or end, signifies the eternity of God's creation, and the endlessness of his love and care for man.

The evergreen foliage serves as a reminder that our faith, our hope, and our love are ever alive and come from God and his Son.

Four candles are placed in the wreath, representing the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. Three of the candles are purple, the color associated with kings and royalty, and one is pink, representing joy. A fifth white candle, placed in the center of the wreath, sometimes referred to as a "Christ candle," is lighted on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The white symbolizes the purity and sinlessness of Christ's life.

Using this guide

This weekly Family Celebration of Christmas Guide is designed to be used during the four weeks prior to Christmas Day. It may be used at a time and place of the family's choosing.

A wreath may be a part of this special time, serving as a visual aid and point of focus for family members reminding them of the mighty act of God sending his Son into our world as Savior. As a part of this celebration, the lighting of candles each week, which symbolize the key ideas, may be helpful.

1998 State Singles Retreat "Celebrating the Single's Journey"

May 23-25
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Conference Highlights
Saturday, May 23

Kick-off rally at 4 p.m. featuring a Christian band leading in worship with praise and contemporary music.

Special Conferences:
"When God Speaks"
"Living In the Spirit"



Family Celebration of Christmas

Celebration of Joy - The Second Week Before Christmas

This week the emphasis is on the response of people concerning the birth of Jesus. Discuss the job of a shepherd and how, during Bible times, it was a lonely isolated job. The response of the shepherds in the fields was one of joy as they discovered a special sign leading them to the city of Bethlehem where they would find a newborn infant, Jesus. If using a wreath, the lighting of the third candle represents "joy." This should be the pink candle. There should now be two purple candles and one pink candle lit.



Read: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." John 1:9 (NIV)

Additional Readings:

Old Testament: Isaiah 35:1-2

New Testament: Luke 2:1-7

Suggested Family Activities:

Invite the family to think together about the idea of "responding." Ask each family member to think of positive ways they have displayed their reactions to a specific good deed or a surprise gift. God has done much for us and fulfilled his promise to us. How can we respond to what he has done for us? Young children can be encouraged to say "Thank you," when people are kind to them or give them something. Often older family members become forgetful or hurried and neglect to say, "Thank you." Place a coin in a jar for each time someone is heard this week saying "Thank you" to another family member. On Sunday place this money in an envelope and give it to the Missions Offering at your church.



Sing: "Joy to the World"

"Journey to One" written and led by Gwen Williams, a single from New Orleans (known as Ms. Chocolate)

"The Joyful Journey" (humor)

Much more, including:
Sunday morning - Vision (a drama team), Biloxi

Sunday journeys and activities

Sunday evening concert by Kindred Heart

Free T-shirts if registered by May 1

Seafood banquet

New Sunday adventures

Make plans now to attend!

Pray this day for

November 14-27, 1997

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

"I have so much to do (today) that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

- Martin Luther

Joel Padilla is a messenger of the Word pastoring Filipino American Mission in Meza, Ariz. Pray that the congregation will experience revival. Pray that the Lord will touch the hearts of the Filipino people in that area.

Most Namibian pastors have little or no financial support for their ministries. Pray that even in poverty these men will remain faithful in preaching the gospel of Christ.

Please continue praying for New Life Baptist Church in Israel as they go through growing pains. Pray for committed leaders and for a meeting place to be found.

Pray for 10 pastorless churches in the Metropolitan Baptist Association in Indianapolis, IN, and for Doug Simpson, the Director of Missions:

The annual meeting of the Chinese Baptist Convention in Taiwan was held in Sept. The attendance was the highest it has been in years, and God's presence was evidenced. Pray for the convention as they seek God's solution for several problems they are facing.

Over a million people in the cities of La Paz and El Alto, Bolivia, are lost and without hope. Pray for a greater vision among evangelicals to reach these people and start churches in this area.

Don Ledbetter is a messenger of the Word pastoring Calvary Baptist Church, Reno, Nev., and is a state director for the evangelism section. Prayer ministries have been started and witness training sessions are being led to carry the gospel to every home in their communities.

Although Nigeria is the oldest continuous Southern Baptist mission field, there are still scores of unreached people groups in this "giant of Africa" with a population of more than 130 million people and more than 400 different languages. Pray for unity among the missionary leaders and the Baptist Convention leaders in Nigeria.

Christians are a tiny minority in Japan society where consensus is important. Too few families come to faith, and individuals feel exposed. Pray that whole families will come to know Christ as Savior.

Thanksgiving Day - President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November 1863 as "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father." Let's keep this tradition as well as be thankful to God every day.

For Queens Court for Acteens; Camp Garaywa; 5 pm, 14th-noon, 15th; sponsored by the WMU. Pray for those living in countries closed to the gospel to be able to have a copy of the Bible.

Pray for persecuted Christians all over the world whether they be in the United States, Russia, China or some other country.

Pray that the churches in Bolivia would be faithful to provide the monthly support for the Bolivian Baptist Convention's first foreign missionary, who is in language school.

JANUARY

4-76 MR. BENJAMIN "KY" JOHNSTON

Mississippi College, P. O. Box 4694, Clinton, MS 39058

Parents: Vincent & Sharon, Conference/Encampment, SERVE IN BRAZIL

4-78 MR. JOSHUA D. METTS

Oklahoma Baptist University, Box 61174, 500 W. University, Shawnee, OK 74801-2590

Parents: Joe, Jr. & Angela, General Evangelism, SERVE IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

5-93 MISS MELEAH PEACOCK

6 Glenhill Crescent, Cochrane, Alberta, TUL 0W3 CANADA

Parents: Kevin & Brenda, Theological Education

8-84 MISS EMILY SMITH

Casilla 223, 8300 Neugen, ARGENTINA

Parents: Steve & Vidonia Smith, General Evangelism

13-82 MR. SCOTT COREY

7336 Anela Place, Diamondhead, MS 39520

Parents: Charles & Patricia, Field Personnel Assistance

15-83 MISS CHESED A. "CHESI" DENT

International Board, 190 Middle Road, #18-01 Fortune Centre, SINGAPORE 188979

Parents: Donald & Anne, Associate to the Area

19-80 MISS E. AMY PARKER

P. O. Box 943, Brandon, MS 39042

Parents: Jeffrey & Shiela, General Evangelism, SERVE IN UNITED KINGDOM

22-86 MR. BENJAMIN J. BAILEY

Apartado 1135, 01901, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Parents: Alvin & Elizabeth, Music Promotion

26-89 MISS HANNAH MICHELLE RAY

Box 5502, 340003 Donetsk-3, UKRAINE

Parents: Michael & Linda, Religious Education

29-84 MR. NEIL A. GREEN

Bolanos 141, 1407 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Parents: Algie & Emily, General Evangelism



1998 Senior Adult Retreats

"Equipping Seniors for Service"
GULFSHORE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

Retreat I – May 19-22

Bill Causey, MBCB, Jackson
"Victory Singers," FBC, Hattiesburg
James Haynes, FBC, Hattiesburg

Retreat II – May 25-27

Bobby Shows, senior adult consultant,
Missouri Baptist Convention
"Heavenly Sunlight Singers," Parkway BC,
Clinton

R. L. & Beth Sigrest, Yazoo City

Retreat III – May 28-30

Ray Wells, senior adult consultant,
Louisiana Baptist Convention
Marcus Peagler, Madison

Sponsored by the
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

"Helping to Bring Mississippi and the World to Jesus"

Correction:

Last issue's MK Birthday Calendar for December was accidentally labeled "November." We apologize for any confusion.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Ralph Alderman, left, was ordained as a deacon by Lakeshore Church, Jackson. Pictured with Alderman is his wife Pat, and Guy Henderson, interim pastor.



Are your seniors tired of crawling over the HUMP? The solution is a 15-passenger van with an aisle, raised roof & electric step. Call Tri-State Van & Bus Today! 1-800-330-3622 BUSES! VANS! PEOPLE MOVERS!

Moak's Creek Church, Summit, recently ordained Monroe Price and David House as deacons. Pictured (above from left) are Price; Billy J. Howse, pastor; and House.

"Seeing me through Heaven's eyes"

FEATURED
GUESTS IN
1998!



- LEE EZELL
- SIERRA
- KAY JAMES
- LORI SALIERNO
- LIZ CURTIS HIGGS
- GIGI GRAHAM
- TCHIVIDJIAN
- CHERI KEAGGY
- MARTHA FELLURE
- BECKY FREEMAN
- LYN WESTAFER
- CANDY HEMPHILL
- CHRISTMAS

BRANSON, MO
▪ April 3-5

TALLADEGA, AL
▪ Feb. 6-7
▪ Feb. 27-28

PIGEON FORGE, TN
▪ March 6-8
▪ March 27-29

BAKERSFIELD, CA
▪ Oct. 23-25

ministry of phil waldrep
evangelistic association



■ AS LOW AS *\$64 PER PERSON -
LODGING INCLUDED!

(*Package B at four per room with the Early Bird Discount applied.)

To find out where your favorite speakers and musicians will be appearing, call us toll-free for a free color brochure!

WOMEN'S WEEKEND GETAWAYS-1998

1 • 8 0 0 • 4 7 5 • 0 8 1 9



Margaret DeHann was recognized by First Church, Bay St. Louis, for attending Sunday School for a period of 30 years without missing a single week. Also recognized were Kathy Zinc, 2 years; Nathan Yow, 2 years; and Sarah Yow, 1 year. DeHann is pictured receiving a certificate and 30 year pin by Bobby Perry, executive director, Gulf Coast Association.

Ken Weathersby, black church extension specialist for the Executive Board ministries of the Tennessee Baptist Convention since 1993, has been named evangelism specialist for the convention. A

native of Mississippi, Weathersby holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and a doctor of ministry degree from Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson.



Faye Sanders was awarded the "Servant of the Year" plaque. She has served as WMU director, Marshall Association, for 27 years. Sanders is a member of Slayden Church.

Venezuela church in need of construction

The Hermon Baptist Church in Caracas, Venezuela, has requested assistance from the Mississippi/Venezuela Partnership Missions Project to help install a concrete roof on the church building in order to construct a second floor of classrooms and a pastor's apartment. The church is in the center of the capital city of five million residents — a highly urban area very much in need of the gospel.

A team of ten people is needed for two weeks in January or February. For more information, contact Bill Hardy, Partnership Missions Coordinator, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



Revival results

Goodyear, Picayune: Oct. 12-15; nine professions of faith (six youth and three adults); Charles Sullivan, Indianapolis, Ind., speaker; Ronnie Cottingham, Agricola, music; Arlis F. Grice, pastor.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Baptist Student Union at the University of Southern Mississippi has three ministry teams available for church events. Wings of Eagles is a mixed ensemble that sings gospel and Christian contemporary music. True Colors, a ladies ensemble, sings contemporary Christian music. Reflections is a drama team that presents the gospel of Christ through skits, drama, and interpretive movement. For more information or to book these groups, contact Michael Ball, associate, at (601) 264-5160.



True Colors



Wings of Eagles

Groups (pictured, from left) are True Colors, Traci Lamey, Gautier; Amy Archer, Mobile, Ala., leader; Terri Turnage, Columbia; Niki Jacobsen, Columbus; Rachel Pruitt, Pascagoula; Shana Ogle, Mobile, Ala.

Wings of Eagles, front row, David Boyd, Pascagoula; Alison Bryant, Clinton; April McHan, Biloxi; Kevin Grimes, Pensacola, Fla.; back row, Erin Hodges, Summit; Michael Shambarger, Booneville; Michael Means, Puckett, leader; Rebecca Scarbrough, Meridian.

Reflections, Katherine Dickerson, Lucedale, assistant leader; Randy Roark, Clarksdale; Selena Chiasson, Lacombe, La.; Billie Dantzler, Pascagoula, leader; Avery Dixon, Liberty; Kristie Pearce, Waveland; Kristofor Mullinax, Biloxi; Alison Bryant, Clinton; second row, Stacy Vincent, Meridian; Rebecca Scarbrough, Meridian; K'Lynne McKinley, Sandersville; Tara Stevens, Laurel; Jenny Stewart, Picayune; Betsy Sheffield, Picayune; Tiffani Lowe, Laurel; third row, Chris Rogers, Petal; Kelly Deacon, Hazlehurst; Keri Grayson, Brandon; Ara Beth Rutledge, Florence; Audrey Humphrey, Hollandale; and Niki Jacobsen, Columbus.

The annual William Carey Holiday Baseball Camp will be held Dec. 26-28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. The camp, for ages 7-17, will feature John Stephenson, former Carey coach and currently a coach with the New York Mets; and Adrian Myers, Texas Ranger outfielder. Bobby Halford and his staff along with other former Crusader professionals

will instruct. Cost of the session is \$75 which includes a noon meal and camp T-shirt. Applications may be obtained by calling the baseball office at (601) 582-6110 or office of external relations at (601) 582-6192.

Donna Bohanan, associate professor of History at Auburn University, will present the R. Glen Eves Lecture at Mississippi College on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. in the Hall of Fame of the B.C. Rogers Student Center. Her topic is entitled "Louis XIV and His Place of Versailles."

The art of Randy Miley, will be on exhibit Nov. 1-Dec. 18 in



Reflections



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THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE of Colonial Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee is accepting resumes at this time. Colonial is a neighborhood church in southeast Memphis with approximately 400 in Sunday School attendance.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS for Youth/Recreation Minister. Send resumes to First Baptist Church of Byram, 7541 Siwell Road, Jackson, MS 39212. Phone 601-372-3156.

HELP WANTED: Staff pianist and staff organist. Immanuel Baptist Church, Cleveland, MS. Good Salary. (601) 843-3507.

ACCEPTING RESUMES: Full-time organist needed. Send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Music Dept., PO Box 249, Raleigh, NC 27615.

RESUMES are currently being accepted for the full time position of Minister of Music/Youth at the Hillside Baptist Church of Greeley, Colorado through December. College and Seminary desired, experience preferred. Other combinations with Music will be consid-

ered. You may call 970-352-7001 or Fax 970-352-7006, for more information. Resumes should be Faxed or sent to 2436 9th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80631.

FOR SALE: 1990 Wheeled Coach church bus, Ford-7.3L diesel engine, 52,000 miles, 30 passenger, with recliners, \$25,000.00. First Baptist Church, Leland, MS 601-686-7357 or Yancy DeLoach 601-686-9947 (evenings).

FOR SALE: Church Pews. Lengths: (14 feet to 22 1/2 feet). Contact: Second Baptist Church, 4680 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, TN 38117, Phone: (901) 682-3395 Fax: (901) 683-8771

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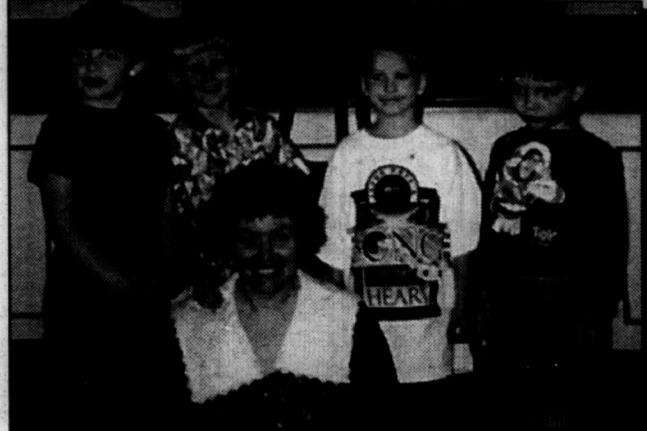
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Mt. Moriah Church Mission Friends



Mt. Moriah Church GAs, grades 1-5



Mt. Moriah Church GAs, grade 6

Mt. Moriah Church, Tippah County, recently held recognition ceremony for Mission Friends and Girls in Action. Mission Friends (sitting) are Julie Brock, leader; (standing, from left) Adrianna Smith, Jesse Trulett, Will Benefield, and David Rainey; Girls in

Action, grades 1-5, (front row) are Kayla Lowry; Nancy Benefield, leader; second row, Brooke Bateman, Tansy Wikel; Kara Brock, Emily Tyer, and Allison Trulett; third row, Kerri Floyd, Anne Benefield, and Tabatha Wikel; Girls in Action, grade 6, (front, from left)

Brandy Parker and Erin Smith; (back row) Erin Shackelford, Stephanie Barkley, Penny Floyd, leader, and Kirby Brock.



Don Stanfill, above, director of missions, Lafayette Association, presented a plaque recognizing the 150th anniversary of Philadelphia Church, Etta, to Jerry Moore, pastor. The plaque was given by the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission. Pictured, from

left, are Moore and Stanfill.

Providence Church, Cleveland, will celebrate its 70th anniversary on Nov. 23, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. The guest speaker will be Buddy McNeer of Yazoo City. Others on program are New Creations, Pontotoc, singing in the afternoon; and Mike Slay, Cleveland, preaching in the afternoon. Eugene Walden is pastor.



Robert Gillis, interim pastor of Faith Church, West Point, was given a check by the youth group to purchase Bibles to give away during his recent mission trip to the Ukraine. Pictured (from left) are Randy Williams, Jason Arnold, Gillis, Amanda Taylor, Gavin Davidson, and David Henley. Not pictured were Angela Griffin, Corey Brooks, Abram Finley, Christy Wilder, Josh Smith, and Valerie Williams.

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Officers for the 1998 Baptist Nursing Fellowship (BNF), pictured from left, are Lydia Nix, Long Beach; Doris Bryant, Pearl; Denise Windom, Roxie; Charlotte Stephenson, Brandon; Delane Pipkin, Vicksburg; Marilyn Eade, Brandon; Mary Holyfield, Brandon, president.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from political attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When no statement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

HOECOMINGS

Linwood, Union: Nov. 23; 9:45 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall at noon; Tommy Anderson, Forest, guest speaker; Jerry Bishop, pastor.

Hollywood, Sledge: Nov. 23; 85th birthday; worship, 11 a.m.; David Norris, former pastor, guest speaker; Jody Hall, music; fellowship meal following morning service; Roy Hartzell, pastor.

AMERICAN PERSECUTION?

Editor:

People are being persecuted all over the world because of religious convictions. Is it happening in America?

Recently, a 35-year employee of a Southern Baptist seminary wrote a letter to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The employee was terminated, within a year of retirement!

Many Baptists have chosen to affiliate with a Christian organization known as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. They are being subjected to an organized campaign of lies and hate.

People who defend religious liberty are also under attack.

A judge in Alabama made a ruling that another judge couldn't push his brand of religion on those who came before his court of law.

This judge is now being subjected to a campaign of hate by the governor and attorney general of Alabama, and the U.S. Congress, as well as people on the radio and TV shows who make a living this way.

Roger Williams is well known as the founder of the Baptist faith in America. One of the greatest Bible scholars of the past century, Henry Halley (author of Halley's Bible Handbook), says about Roger Williams: "His great passion was for the absolute separation of church and state."

We have people today who would sell out our heritage of freedom of religion for political gain.

Carl L. Hess
Dothan, AL

GARAYWA MEMORIES

Editor:

What wonderful memories Marjean Patterson "stirred-up" in my mind ... of a wonderful week spent in the woods at Camp Garaywa way back in the early 50's. What fun we had during Training Union Camp! I write this letter to publicly thank Bob Dent for the terrific way he has maintained the camp and its grounds. It's a dawn to dusk (and often beyond) job. I'm not sure just how long he has been employed but I do know that he has almost single-handedly kept an old campus up and running. The WMU made a wise investment when they brought Bob and Kathy Dent to Camp Garaywa. They are two of our unsung Baptist heroes!

Dorothy K. Moore
Raymond

ALCOHOL TRAGEDIES

Editor:

Can I say a hardy amen to your article ("Much too beautiful a day," Oct. 30)?

It was super. My kids were watching a program last night called video cops or something

like that. Anyway, the gist of the program was the arrest of drunks. It was humorous to begin with, but suddenly there was the stark reality of the carnage caused by the drunk driver. 17,000 people a year, according to this program, are killed by drunk drivers.

Can anyone tell me why our President is so up in arms over tobacco smoke — which is bad, harmful, kills, and should be stopped, but the innocent lives that die each year from the alcohol-related accidents is impossible to compare. Maybe the splinter and log thing comes into play here.

I just do appreciate your courage to speak up about a subject that so many Christians avoid. Keep up the good work!

Faye McCraw
Laurel

SEEKING NOMINEES

Editor:

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus! I am deeply grateful for your prayers during these days of anticipation for our annual Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City. Soon, we will begin the process of appointing individuals who will serve on four significant SBC committees: (1) Committee on Committees (2) Resolutions Committee (3) Credentials Committee and (4) Tellers Committee. Your input would be greatly appreciated during the selection process.

Please submit only the name of individuals whom you know, by personal conversation and experience, to possess the following qualities:

1. A personal relationship with Christ illustrated by a consistent daily walk with Him.

2. A clear commitment to the view that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God.

3. Strong affirmation of Christian character by his or her peers.

4. An understanding that any responsibility with our SBC is a place of service rather than "positional glory."

Please urge your readers to give prayerful consideration as they submit their nominations. Please return by January 15, 1998 to:

Tom Elliff
First Southern Baptist Church
P.O. Box 15039
Del City, Oklahoma 73155

Thank you again for your prayerful input and faithfulness in assisting with the completion of this vital task. I trust God will bless your every effort for His glory.

Thomas D. Elliff, President
Southern Baptist Convention

ACT SOON FOR HERITAGE

Editor:

Would you like to help preserve our Baptist Heritage? You can but we must act soon as time is running out for some

things to be preserved:

1. Preserve the shed on Hwy 61 north of Natchez. A young man recently visited this history of our Baptist beginnings in Mississippi and gave a bad report on the condition of the shed which protects the Baptist history there.

2. Preserve the gravesite of our first Baptist preacher in Mississippi, Richard Curtis (1756-1811). It is a possibility that the property could be obtained from owners and make a nice walk from the Ebenezer Church (1806), Amite County, to Curtis' grave.

3. Preserve some of our old books in the Mississippi Baptist Historical Library, Clinton. One book published in 1866 by John G. Jones gives the beginning of Baptists and other faiths also.

Who will help? Seems we need a committee for these important places and things. All of this has been preserved for us. Are we going to preserve these things for the future generations?

Bonnie L. Cole
Bogue Chitto

DON'T BE DISRESPECTFUL

Editor:

During a recent Sunday morning worship service, a well-known visiting speaker invited the congregation to reverence the reading of God's Word by standing, and then said, "and because Dallas is playing today!"

Equating reverence for the Dallas Cowboys with reverence for God's Word! How more sacrilegious can one be?

The worship service had begun with stirring anthems and hymns and prayers that lifted us to the very "Throne of Grace" so that in our own sanc-

tuary we were experiencing something of the divine majesty and glorious presence of our Holy Heavenly Father. But then the Dallas Cowboys had to be brought in!

The speaker's words got him some laughs and called attention to himself and the Cowboys! (They may be "America's Team," and our speaker's team, but they are not God's Team and certainly are not needed in any service where God is being worshiped).

When we stand (and we should), in reverential awe, to honor God's Word, it is not a time to honor any other person, group, or thing, nor is it a time for laughing!

The speaker's remark was irreverent, to say the least, flagrantly disrespectful of our Heavenly Father, and a biting affront to Christians who stood to sincerely honor God's Word!

Something is terribly wrong!
Claude A. Luttrell
Jackson

PROFESSORS CONTINUE

Editor:

Old theological seminary professors, those of long-term service, do not just die or merely fade away.

They continue their study and teaching of the Bible, their loyalty and support to the churches, and their steadfast witness to Jesus Christ.

I know many of these elders as friends and colleagues, and believe that my statement is true.

In any case, with diligence and dedication, I pledge my personal prayers and efforts to make it true.

J. Hardee Kennedy
Meridian

MBREA officers



Members of the Mississippi Baptist Religious Educators Association (MBREA) met Oct. 28 at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, prior to the start of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. MBREA officers selected to serve during 1997-98 are (from left) Wendell Frazier, Petal Harvey Church, Petal - president elect; Angie Boydston, First Church, Jackson - president of MBREA childhood group; Steve Hurt, Calvary Church, Tupelo - president; Don Hicks, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board - first vice president; and Cortez Hutchinson, First Church, Yazoo City - secretary treasurer. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Make a difference

Nehemiah 1-2

By Wayne VanHorn

Nehemiah served as a cup bearer for King Artaxerxes of Persia. The events of Nehemiah 2 occurred in the king's twentieth year, or around 445 B.C. (Neh. 2:1). Ezra the scribe had returned to Judah about fourteen years earlier and had begun religious reforms. Word came to Nehemiah that the remnant which had returned to Judah were in "great trouble and shame" and the wall and gates of the city remained in a state of disrepair (Neh. 1:3). Nehemiah mourned, fasted, and prayed. Through this process God gave him a vision to rebuild Jerusalem.

God-Given Vision (2:4-5). As



Nehemiah was serving the king, the king noticed his sad countenance and inquired as to the reason for it. Nehemiah explained the dire conditions of his countrymen back home. Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah to make a specific request. Nehemiah prayed before asking the king for leave to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah knew that such a request was "out of line" and that his only job was to serve the king, so his fear (2:2) of the king's reaction is understandable. Only through prayer did Nehemiah gain the confidence to make the request to go to Jerusalem.

God-Timed Opportunity (2:6-8). To Nehemiah's surprise

the king asked for the details of the trip, particularly how long he would be gone. Nehemiah "set him a time" for his return (2:6b; RSV). This verse illustrates how God's people can do his will while at the same time being accountable to the earthly rulers they serve.

Nehemiah found new confidence from the king's willingness to let him make the journey. This confidence resulted in Nehemiah's request for letters of safe passage (2:7) and a letter for the provision of wood to be used in building (2:8). These specific request for letters indicates that Nehemiah had done detailed planning even before he left for Judah. The king complied with all of Nehemiah's requests. Nehemiah attributed this cooperation to the fact that "the good hand of my God was upon me" (2:8b). Through

prayer Nehemiah had secured the support of the king. The timing was right because the Lord had given Nehemiah favor in the eyes of the king.

God-Inspired Survey (2:15-16). Soon after his return to Jerusalem, Nehemiah slipped out of the city to do a first hand inspection of the wall. He wanted to know exactly what was needed to get the job done before he disclosed to the people what God had put into his heart to do. He inspected the breeches in the wall as well as the gates that had been destroyed by fire. Nehemiah displayed a great deal of wisdom by conducting this secret survey. His assessment of the situation, which he would later give to the people, would not be based upon second hand reports and emotional reactions, but upon his own direct investigation. Nehemiah gathered necessary information as to the size and scope of the project at hand.

God-Directed Leadership (2:17-18). When the time came for his proposal to the people, Nehemiah displayed great wisdom in his handling of the situation. First he used inclusive language to identify with the people. This was not "your" problem but "our" problem. "You see the trouble we are in" (2:17). Second, he proposed a direct solution that benefitted all the people, "Let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace" (2:17b). Third, he gave testimony to the hand of God on his life and how the king had given his support (2:18b). The result of this approach was overwhelming support for Nehemiah's proposal, "Let us rise up and build" (2:18). The people strengthened their hands to do the good work that had remained undone for over ninety years. God answers prayer!

VanHorn is pastor, First Church, Columbia.

LIFE AND WORK

Praying for others

John 17:9-19; James 5:14-16

By Geneva England



England

John 17 glorified the Father through his completed work on earth. Jesus further prayed to be restored to his eternal glory (vs. 1-6) and for his disciples to experience the full measure of his joy in order to counter Satan's attacks (vs. 6-19). He asked the Father to protect them so they might continue in oneness with God and with each other.

Next, he prayed for spiritual unity of all believers (vs. 20-26), including those who would later trust in him as Savior. He prayed that the lost would believe on him as the Son of God and as believers share in his glory in heaven.

In examining this prayer, we see how loving and caring

Jesus is. This knowledge gives us inner joy and unhindered fellowship with him, especially when Satan "bruises our heels."

Pray for Devotion to Jesus' Mission (John 17:17-19). Jesus chose each of his disciples, walked with them daily, and taught them his truths. Just before his ascension, he commissioned the faithful Eleven to go into the world to share the good news to both Jews and Gentiles. They enthusiastically followed his instructions, even when persecuted. Christ foresaw Satan's snares and temptations directed toward his followers and led James to record this warning: "Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4 NIV).

Just as the Father sent Jesus Christ to be his ambassador to fallen man, Jesus sent the disciples, and now he sends us.

When Christ prayed for the disciples' sanctification, he prayed that the power of sin be removed from their lives so that they would be set apart for his work. The disciples' mission was to spread the Gospel to the whole world; so is ours. We should say like Paul, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20 NIV). We must guard against worldliness creeping into our lives.

Pray for Physical and Spiritual Healing (James 5:14-16). James enumerates specifics to request in our prayers such as physical and spiritual healing, wisdom, and the well-being of the church and nation. He urged the ill or sin-sick to ask church leaders to pray for them because intercessory prayers offered in faith are powerful and effective. Thus, believers minister to one another through prayer. The oil and vinegar ointment (v. 14), reputedly a medicinal remedy during Christ's time, shows that

medical care is within God's plan. It is unscriptural to "test" God by praying without using the wisdom he gives us to seek aid. One noted evangelist commented that God expects us "to put legs to our prayers."

Just as God answered the prayers of the saints of old, answers prayers today. A good example from Old Testament times was King Hezekiah, who was sick unto death. When he humbled himself and prayed, his life was extended fifteen years. A New Testament example occurred when Peter prayed and the life of Dorcas was restored.

Sometimes, God's will does not include healing, such as King David's infant child and Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Yet both claimed the sufficiency of God's grace. No more beautiful testimony can be uttered than "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13)!

England is a member of First Church, Grenada.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Tests of faith

Genesis 18-20

By Jason Bird



Bird

Sarah's servant Hagar (Genesis 16). God rebuked them, reminded them time and again he would accomplish his plan in his time. However, Sarah began to doubt she would ever have a child. God knew her heart and asked the question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" All God had promised to Abraham up to this point depended on the answer to that question. If God was unable to do the humanly impossible, then Abraham and Sarah had no hope for fulfillment of his promises. In his covenant with Abraham, God was always the initiator. It was a covenant between two people who were not equals and

always depended upon the power of God. Abraham and Sarah's dilemma was not unlike those faced by believers today. Often we are faced with circumstances that, according to our finite wisdom, seem impossible. But God has never been limited in what he can do. True faith enables us to live our lives confident that with God, all things are possible. He can do far and above all that we could ever hope for or imagine.

The test regarding judgement and grace (18:22-26). The scene shifts for the next test of faith in Abraham's life. With the situation in the wicked city of Sodom, the test was not about God's power, but whether God could be trusted to balance his righteous judgement with mercy and grace. The righteous people in the land had cried out con-

cerning the sin in Sodom and Gomorrah. God declared he would examine the city himself.

Concerned over the people, Abraham asked God to spare everyone in the city for the sake of the righteous. The decreasing numbers in Abraham's pleas were not to make God do something against his will. Instead, they represent Abraham's belief that surely some people in these wicked cities had not turned against God.

The tension between judgement and grace occurs throughout the Bible. Many believe God is all mercy and no wrath; others believe the opposite. An appropriate view recognizes God is holy and just and must punish sin. However, he is loving and desires no one have to pay the penalty for their sin. The test of faith for Abraham and for believers today is to trust that God, in his holiness, can perfectly balance the two.

The test in facing a personal

threat (20:2, 11-13). Abraham did not learn his lesson while in Egypt. As he moves to new territory, he fears for his life because of Sarah and once again lies that she is his sister. Doing so compromised the integrity of his family and showed a lack of faith in God's protective abilities.

As before, God thwarted Abraham's plan to show Abraham God could meet his every need, including protection. That same God is able and can meet our every need today, no matter how great the crisis may seem.

The Abraham who failed the test of faith in chapter twenty is the same man who was such a giant of faith in chapter twelve. Like all of us, he triumphed and failed, and ultimately learned that it is always better to trust in God than in self.

Bird is pastor, 15th Avenue Church, Meridian.

Southern Baptist relishes Super Bowl role

By Karen L. Willoughby
BP Correspondent

TIGARD, Ore. (BP) — Josh Ruptak probably will watch the Super Bowl clash between champions of the American and National football conferences from one of the owners' boxes in San Diego, where the Super Bowl will take place.

For sure he'll be meeting all the NFL team owners.

That's his job.

Ruptak started in early October working 30 hours a week as an intern under the VIP hospitality program supervised by the Super Bowl '98 Host Committee's business manager.

Tapped by the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB) for the assignment, the rest of Ruptak's time will be spent as a missions volunteer helping coordinate Super Bowl evangelistic events through San Diego-area churches.

Ruptak got his job by taking the initiative to become an effective witness for Christ, said Adrian Hall, Northwest Baptist Convention evangelism strategist.

One of the youngest consistent participants in NAMB's national schools of evangelism, Ruptak caught the attention this year of Tim Knopps, who works as a volunteer in NAMB's evangelism events unit. One of Knopps' responsibilities is finding Southern Baptists to work as volunteers for big sporting events such as the Super Bowl.

The Super Bowl Organizing Committee recognizes Southern Baptists send people of the highest caliber who can do their assignment, are morally qualified and aren't going to embarrass the Super Bowl with their lifestyle, Hall said, noting Ruptak was in the right place at the right time in his life.

Ruptak acknowledged that hasn't always been the case.

He started drinking while a freshman in high school; smoking soon followed. "Sex and drugs are about the only things I haven't done," Ruptak said in an interview after a post-church brunch at Hall Boulevard Church, Tigard, Ore., where his father, Mike, is pastor.

What he has done includes being convicted of grand theft auto at the age of 12. He and a friend towed a junked riding lawn mower home from what they thought was a city dump. It turned out to be a man's yard. He objected to what he said was a theft of his vehicle. The penalty: a \$30 fine and 100 hours of community service.

As to his teen drinking, "I took the first drink to go along with the crowd, seeing what it would be like," Ruptak acknowledged.

"After that, I remembered how much fun it had been. I'd gotten horribly sick, but you forget about how bad you felt when you get to talking about how much fun you had."

Then, he said, drinking "lost its pizazz, it lost its glamour. I was building up a tolerance for it and that scared me, so I stopped."

Nowadays, however, he said his friends "keep remembering me how I was, a blundering idiot, and that hurts me because I see what I did wasn't helping my relationship with them."

Three NAMB schools of evangelism have nurtured Ruptak's witness.

He led his first person to the Lord when he was 8 years old; he's led 18 in the years since his father has been pastor at Hall Boulevard. But he credits a change in his heart with the Super Bowl assignment.

"I sat down to witness to one kid (at a block party in Portland) who was just like I was in high school — theater, wrestling, everything was just the same," Ruptak said, except: "He seemed to have a genuine faith."

Moved by the youth's faith, Ruptak said he "prayed and prayed and walked around, and it just triggered, 'God's glory, God's true glory.'

"My job is not to witness, my job is not to be there for people, but for God," Ruptak reflected. "My job is to keep my relationship with God intimate."

Within minutes of that revelation, Knopps came up to Ruptak to ask if he would be interested in the Super Bowl volunteer missions assignment.

"I thought I'd be running errands, making copies, that type of thing," Ruptak said. "Finally I told Tim I'd do it, and then I got this fax that completely floored me: ... that the duties would include hosting NFL owners."

As a high school sophomore attending his first national school of evangelism, he recounted that he gave control of his life to God, sort of.

"Being in that atmosphere, I felt whole and happy and at peace," Ruptak said. "It made me feel warm. I asked God to take over and do with me as he wanted. However, I fought with him every step of the way."

In high school he was a varsity wrestler and received the best actor award his junior year for his role as the king of thieves in "Aladdin." He also drank and smoked with his friends, and lied about it to his parents.

At the same time, he was active in his youth group at church, often attending soul-winning events with his father, who is Interstate (Oregon) Baptist Association's evangelism director.

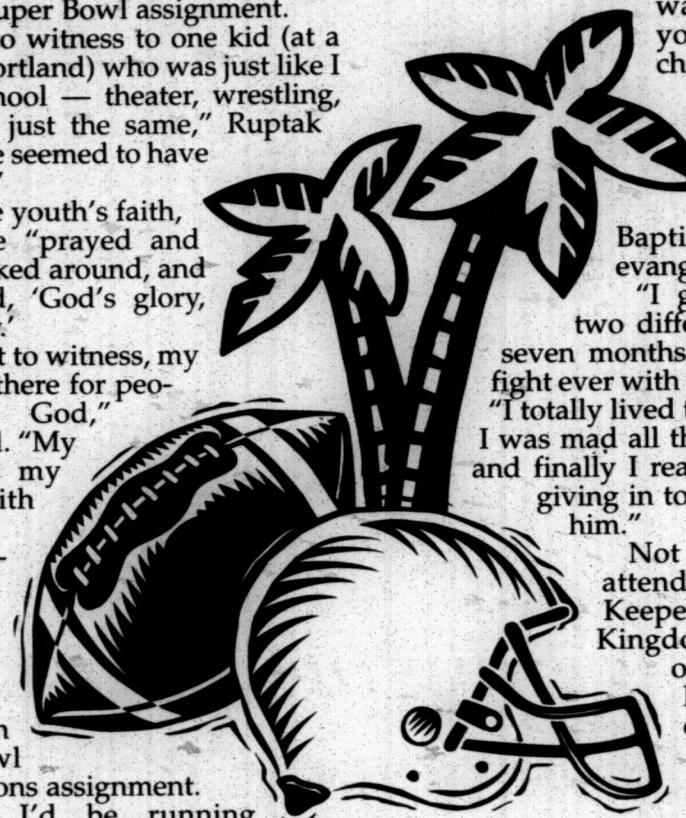
"I got tired of living two different lives and for seven months I had the biggest fight ever with God," Ruptak said. "I totally lived the life I wanted to. I was mad all the time, depressed, and finally I realized it was better giving in to God than fighting him."

Not long after, he attended a Promise Keepers rally at the Kingdome in Seattle as one of 40 men from Hall Boulevard church and the Filipino church that also uses its building.

"We were all broken," Ruptak said. "Guys in tears, holding onto each other, telling God, 'Fine, I give up. Do with me as you want.' Now I'm at peace. I'm filled up and happy."

"It's hard to explain what God has done," Ruptak continued. "A lot of the world is the same around me, but it feels different now."

Not knowing what direction his life will take after the Super Bowl nor how he'll provide for his personal expenses while in San Diego as a volunteer doesn't pose great concern to Ruptak, who said his life and everything in it is under God's control.



Elliff says he's been overwhelmed by SBTS firing 'misinformation'

DEL CITY, Okla. (ABP) — Southern Baptist Convention President Tom Elliff said he has been "overwhelmed by the massive amount of misinformation being disseminated" about the firing of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reference librarian Paul Debusman.

What that misinformation is, however, he did not explain.

Debusman, a 35-year employee of the seminary who was 10 months away from retirement, was fired Sept. 26 apparently for writing a personal letter to Elliff that questioned the historical accuracy of statements Elliff made in a seminary chapel address.

Baptist Press, the news service of the SBC Executive Committee, did not run a story about the firing but published a Nov. 6 article citing Elliff's dismay over other news reports about the firing.

The original story about the firing, which first appeared in the Kentucky Baptist newspaper Western Recorder, was published by Associated Baptist Press, Associated Press, Religion News Service and many daily and weekly newspapers across the nation.

Elliff declined comment for a news story released by ABP Oct. 2.

In the Nov. 6 Baptist Press release, Elliff reiterated his earlier statement that as a matter of presidential protocol, and unless otherwise requested, copies of all correspondence he receives are forwarded to the boards, institutions or agencies to which they relate.

"Dr. Debusman's letter, sent on Southern Seminary letterhead, contained no such request and was routinely sent, without comment, to that institution," Elliff said in the Baptist Press statement.

"I have steadfastly refused to register any criticism, complaint or offense regarding Dr. Debusman, to any entity, either publicly or privately, in verbal or written form."

"It is unfortunate that some have been left to extensive journalistic speculation regarding this situation," Elliff said. "I have discovered evolutionary theorists are not alone in producing prodigious speculation from scant and falsely interpreted facts. Be that as it may, I have consistently refused to publicly add fuel to this issue by making repeated statements regarding it. I hold no malice or grievance toward anyone in this matter but am aware that only God can show others the sincerity of my heart."

Bibliocipher

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ROZ U KSJJ FD KUNSG
LAGOVEOVE CA OVNF
SQSGJULNOVE JODS.
IFRV DFCG: DFCGNSSV

Clue: E equals G
Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalms Seven One.